Education for Democracy Issue

The Southern PATRIOT

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TRENDS

Sept. 13 the Tennessee Supreme Court refused to rehear arguments of the constitutionality of the poll tax repeal bill passed by the 1943 legislature. In July a three to two decision of the Court held that the tax was mandatory and the bill repealing the tax unconstitutional.

Removal of the price tag from Tennessee's ballot can now be achieved only through a constitutional amendment, a constitutional convention, or the election of a liberal Judge to the Supreme Court who would hold with Chief Justice Green and Associate Justice Neil that the 1943 repeal bill was constitutional and legal.

* * *

A saving of $60,000 a year would be effected by the General Shoe Company of Nashville if it enjoyed the same freight rates as its competitors in St. Louis, according to Maxie Jarman, president. The company moves some 23,000,000 pounds of material a year from Boston to the Nashville area for the manufacture of shoes. The figure given is based on class rates which show a 31 percent differential between Boston-St. Louis and Boston-Nashville.

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Vidalia, Ga., has the distinction of being the only community in the state that does not require payment of a poll tax to vote in city elections. The tax was abolished by an amendment to the city charter introduced by T. Ross Sharpe and passed by the 1943 general assembly.

* * *

The defeat of Mike Conner in Mississippi primaries upset the apple-cart of the hate-Roosevelt politicians. Conner had two planks in his platform—"that man" in Washington and "white-supremacy". Tom Bailey, the successful candidate, is generally regarded as the choice of the little man, while Conner was the fair-haired boy of wealth and special privilege.

* * *

Tennessee led the Nation in Seabee enlistments in June and July. The Seabees, Navy's construction battalions composed in large part of members of organized labor, played an important role in the invasion of Sicily.

(Continued on Page 6.)

Army Rejects 750,000 For Illiteracy

Revelation that about 750,000 men have been effectively lost to the United States Army because of illiteracy, has raised some major questions about the educational systems of the various States. This loss of approximately 50 divisions does not include the class of the 18-19 year olds, according to information released through a recent article in the JOURNAL of the National Education Association.[1]

Though no figures are available on Army rejections for illiteracy State by State, it is reasonable to assume that the States which show the highest illiteracy rates through the U. S. Census will show the highest rejections. Those States, with a single exception, are all in the South.

The Army's definition of illiteracy is a practical one: the ability to read an ordinary newspaper. This is about the equivalent of having completed a fourth grade education. It is easy to see that a modern mechanized army has no use for men who cannot come up to these limited educational qualifications.

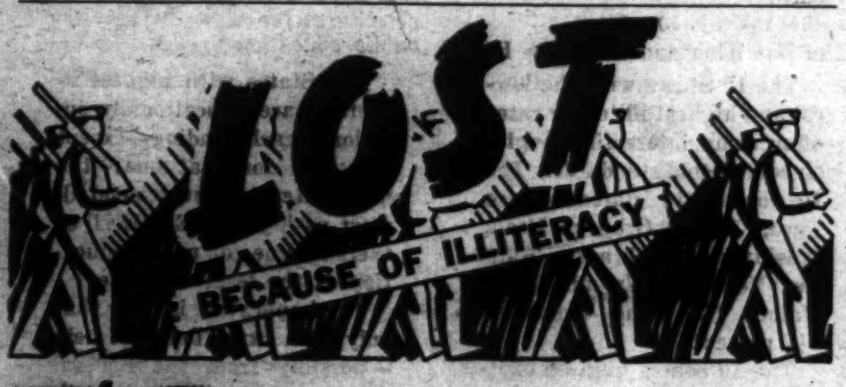
The 1940 Census showed that one out of seven Americans 25 years old or over can be classed as "functionally" illiterate on the basis of the Army definition, since they lack fourth grade education. As for the 18-19 year old group, the Selective Service System has stated that about 12% of Negro registrants have been rejected for educational deficiency, along with over 1% of white registrants of the same age group. When these figures are detailed as to States, it is probable that a major share of the responsibility will lie with the South.

[1] "The Alphabet and the Army"—March, 1943.

More White than Negro Illiterates

One of the commonest mistakes made in any discussion of the illiteracy problem is to assume that our high rate is primarily due to low standards of Negro education. This is

(Continued on Page 2.)



50 DIVISIONS

Percentages of Adult Illiterates

BY STATES AND REGIONS

U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION CHART

Army Rejects 750,000 For Illiteracy

(Continued from Page 1.)

only a half-truth, at best, because white illiterates proportionately far outnumber Negroes. Though illiteracy among the 18-19 year olders is higher among Negroes, of the older age classifications rejected by the Army for educational deficiency whites outnumber Negroes. Of the 750,000 educational rejectees, 500,000 are white, and 250,000 Negro.

As for the general population age 25 or over, Census figures show 7,300,000 whites as functionally illiterate, and 2,700,000 Negroes. Of the whites, 4,200,000 are native born.

(See chart, p. 5.)

The Fat Kine and the Lean Kine

The 10 States with the lowest and highest illiteracy rates offer some interesting angles on educational standards. The 10 lowest in illiteracy are Iowa, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Nebraska, Kansas, Vermont, Wyoming, and Maine. They range from 4 to 7½ percent.

The 10 States highest in illiteracy are Tennessee, Arkansas, Virginia, North Carolina, New Mexico, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana. They range from 21½ to 35½ percent.

Here is a table showing some comparisons:

	States with Lowest Illiteracy	States with Highest Illiteracy
Average annual salary per teacher	$820.50	$639.50
Average No. of pupils enrolled per teacher	23.4	34.2
Average annual expenditure per pupil	80.04	$37.16
Average days attended per pupil enrolled	153.5	128
Per cent of income represented by expenditures for public education	4.9	4.3

The States with highest illiteracy are educationally inferior in each heading—except one. As for that one: the most illiterate States spend almost as high a PERCENT of their income for public education as the least illiterate.

The implication is clear that only with extra financial help—possibly from the Federal Government—will the most illiterate States be able to raise their standards to the national level.

Data from U. S. Office of Education—1940 figures.

War Increases Child Labor

During the war period the increasing employment of children has assumed alarming proportions.

Reports on employment certificates issued in the country as a whole, which serve as an index to the employment of children, show that in 1942 approximately 1,000,000 youth between 14 and 18 years of age obtained certificates for full-time or part-time work, an increase of about 25% over 1940, and about 100% over 1941. For the first time since the Children's Bureau has been receiving comparable reports for both age groups the number of 14- and 15-year-old children certificated increased proportionately more than the number of 16- and 17-year-olds.

The first 3 months of 1943 show an increase of 115 percent over the first 3 months of 1942 in the number of children obtaining certificates for full-time or part-time employment. Once more there was a comparatively greater increase in the employment of 14- and 15-year olds than of 16- and 17-year olds; an increase of 173 percent for the younger group as compared with an increase of 107 per cent for the older group.

Certificates issued for minors 16 and 17 during the first 5 months of '42 as compared with the first 5 months of '43.

	1942	1943
Alabama	1,358	7,572
Florida	1,193	2,670
Kentucky	504	1,204
North Carolina	5,631	12,128
Tennessee	534	3,310
Virginia	1,529	3,584

Figures indicate only the number of minors who obtained certificates. They do not include all employed minors in the group nor can one State be compared with another. In North Carolina for instance where certificates are required under the State law for 16- and 17-year-old minors, it is logical to assume that a larger proportion of all employed minors would obtain certificates than would obtain them in Kentucky where certificates are optional for this age group. South Carolina makes no provision at all for employment certificates and in Mississippi and Texas the requirements are so weak and inadequate as to be ineffectual.

TEACHER SHORTAGE CREATES SCHOOL CRISIS

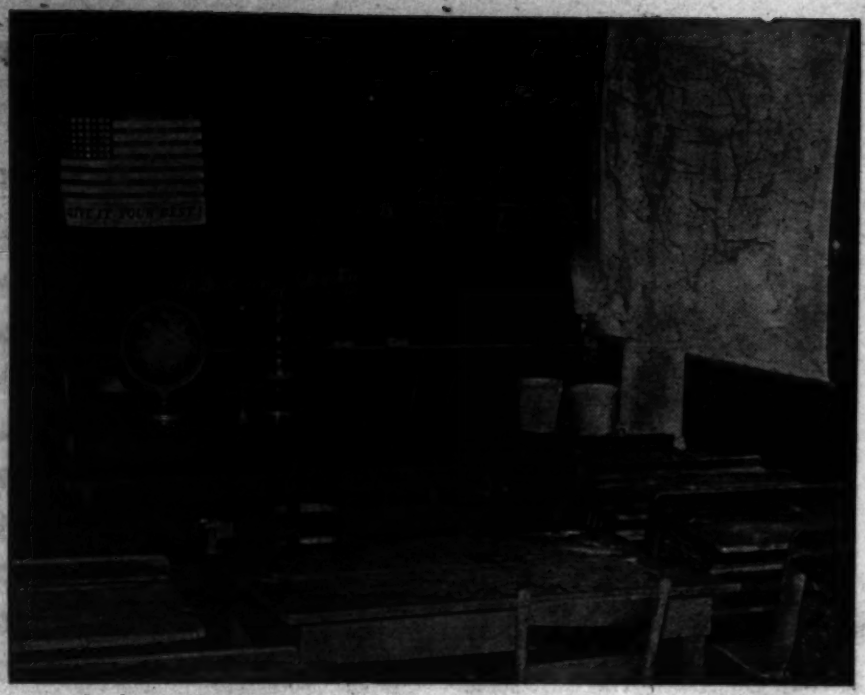


Photo by JOHN MALONE in NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN.

This school in Robertson County, Tennessee, is closed because the teacher has taken work elsewhere. Last year there were 13,000 class room closings in the Nation. A "substantial" increase is expected this year.

Teacher shortage is one of the biggest problems which have hit schools everywhere in the U. S. But in the South, shortage is even more acute because salaries have been so low. In only four of the Southern States have teachers averaged over $1,000 a year, and in one the average is only a little more than $500. So far, less than a half-dozen Southern States have reported salary increases for teachers in order to meet the increased cost of living. And even these increases are likely to fall far short of meeting the real needs.

Southern Teachers Enter Industry

Southern teachers, when not entering the armed forces, have felt they could not put aside the offers of better wages in war industry. As a result, some class rooms have closed their doors, while others have remained open with emergency teachers—whose qualifications are often sketchy.

In the May issue of the ALABAMA SCHOOL JOURNAL, H. R. Greer, Past President of the Alabama Education Association, described the effect of teacher shortage as follows:

"One Congressman from North Alabama, who has a son attending high school in this State, is well aware of the serious turnover that is taking place in the teaching profession. During the first semester of this session, this Congressman's son had five different mathematics teachers and seven different chemistry teachers."

Mr. Greer showed that the average salary of a teacher in Alabama last year was less than $15 a week, and that wartime increases had brought it up to something less than $18 a week, figured on an annual basis. He drew this conclusion: "The public school is the only government agency contributing in a major way to the war effort which is still financed on a peacetime basis."

What the South as a whole is up against in lost teachers is shown by turnover estimates made by the National Education Association for 1942-43. The NEA forecast that Texas, Oklahoma, and Georgia would lose 35% or MORE of their teachers; Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Kentucky would lose 25% to 35%; North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida would lose 15% to 25%. These are all serious losses.

Emergency Permits

In order to make up for the shortage of teachers, various States have resorted to the device of issuing emergency teaching certificates, or permits. During the school year 1942-43, Alabama issued nearly 2,700 such certificates; Arkansas, over 1,600; Florida, over 800; Georgia, 1,000; Kentucky, nearly 2,500; Tennessee, 2,400; and so on throughout the South.

Enrollment Drops in Teachers Colleges

With teaching such a relatively unattractive profession, at least financially, enrollment in teachers colleges has been falling off sharply. As a result, the supply of new teachers has become wholly inadequate. Says the North Carolina Superintendent of Schools: "If the war should last 2 or 3 years during which time only a few people attended college to prepare to teach, there would be a period of some 10 years before we could again expect an adequate supply of teachers."

Southern States Needs Better Laws Covering Child Labor

Of the 13 Southern States only four, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida, have legislation prohibiting the employment of children under 16 years of age in factories.[1]

In the other 9 States, the child labor laws extend varying degrees of protection to younger children. In Texas, children 12 years of age may leave school for employment in certain types of jobs provided they have permits, although 15 years is the minimum age for factory employment. In Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Virginia, 14-year-old children may leave school for employment under certain conditions. There are some restrictions as to the types of work in which these minors may engage but in most instances work in factories, unless it is particularly hazardous, is permitted along with work in stores, places of amusement, and service establishments.

Employment in Agriculture

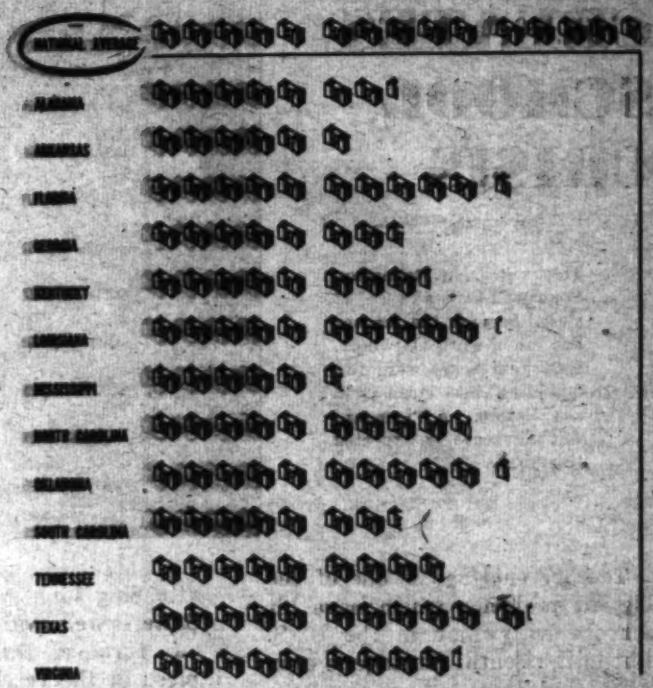
As a rule employment in agriculture and employment in domestic service are exempt in the Southern States from the coverage of the State child labor laws and of course large numbers of children in the South work in agriculture at almost any age.

Street Trades Take Heavy Toll

Employment in street trades is reasonably well covered by the child labor laws of only 4 States in the South, Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia. Widespread abuses exist in street trades employment including late evening hours and early morning hours, frequently resulting in children being too tired and sleepy to keep up with their school work.

[1]*In 3 of these, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Louisiana, employment of minors under 16 during school hours is specifically prohibited by the child labor law. Children 14 may be employed in restricted jobs outside of school hours in North Carolina and Louisiana. Florida permits employment in limited jobs for children as young as 12 outside of school hours and South Carolina has no minimum age for employment other than the 16-year minimum for employment in mines and factories, and during school hours for other employment.*

Teachers' Salaries in the South 1940-41



U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION CHART

Federal Laws Help States

The child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act establish a basic minimum age of 16 for employment in manufacturing and processing occupations and for all employment during school hours in establishments subject to the provision. Employment in agriculture is subject to the Act during the hours when children are legally required to attend school. Funds have been insufficient for proper administration of the Federal law although the provisions of the Federal law and the administration which has been possible have resulted in appreciable improvement in the child labor conditions in the South, and in underpinning State standards and legislation.

Move to Relax Laws

The War Manpower Commission has officially taken the position that school attendance laws and child labor standards embodied in State and Federal laws should be preserved and enforced. Nevertheless there have been some relaxations and in addition some unsuccessful attempts at relaxation of child labor laws and standards as illustrated by the following limited comments:

In Alabama an unsuccessful attempt was made to lower the minimum age for the employment of boys in bowling alleys.

In Florida the child labor law was amended with some losses but also some gains.

In Louisiana there have been some administrative relaxations.

In North Carolina certain relaxations have been proposed under authority recently given by the legislature.

In South Carolina an amendment permitting children 14 and 15 to work until a later hour at night was introduced but defeated.

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Education—Democracy's Unfinished Business

Teachers are deserting their low paid jobs en masse, not to enter the armed forces but to take better paying jobs in industry. The South with an average annual teachers' salary of $917, 50 percent below the national average, is hit especially hard. A two-room school in Dickson County, Tennessee, closed this week. Both teachers found $2,400 jobs in Detroit. The most they could make in their County school system was a little over $800. In another Tennessee County 138 teachers averaged $632.96 last year.

The result is overcrowded classes, poorly equipped substitute teachers, and closed schools. Said Supt. J. M. Stuart of Dickson County, "We have 28 permit teachers, most of them with only a high school education. . . We're taking anyone who can read or write."[1]

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In spite of all its cultural traditions, the South in peace-time offered its children a "second-rate" education, spending only half as much per child enrolled as the national average. Now in war-time it is a third or fourth-rate education.

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The heart of the matter is that the South does not have enough taxable property to adequately provide for its children. The Northeastern states have three times as much property per person to support their schools and institutions. The facts are that the South spends slightly more of its taxable income on education than other regions.

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The Southern rural areas in particular carry a disproportionate share of the Nation's educational load. In 1930 the rural Southeast had to care for 4,250,000 children of school age, although they received only 2 percent of the Nation's income. The nonfarm population of the Northeast, on the other hand, cared for 8,500,000 children but received 42 percent of the total national income—21 times as much income to educate only twice as many children.

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Equality of opportunity for all children is a basic democratic concept.

It is obvious that there is but one way in which to make it a reality—that is to provide federal aid. Congress should pass at once the Thomas-Hill bill (S. 637).

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Federal Aid is the Solution

Federal aid to education has been proposed through the "Educational Finance Act of 1943," which would appropriate $200,000,000 to "assist the States and Territories in more adequately financing their systems of public education during the emergency, and in reducing the inequalities of educational opportunities through public elementary and secondary schools." This Bill, S.-637, introduced into the Senate last February by Senators Thomas of Utah and Hill of Alabama, has been favorably reported out of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor.

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Regarding Federal appropriations for education, Edgar L. Morphet, Director of Administration and Finance, Florida State Department of Education, recently said: "Congress has . . . indirectly faced the problem of the need for federal funds for education but never has been willing to face the problem directly and set up a plan of federal support for the schools." Among other things, he came to this conclusion: "The need for federal funds for education should be met directly by providing federal support for education instead of being met indirectly by providing funds . . . through devious channels. . . ."[2]

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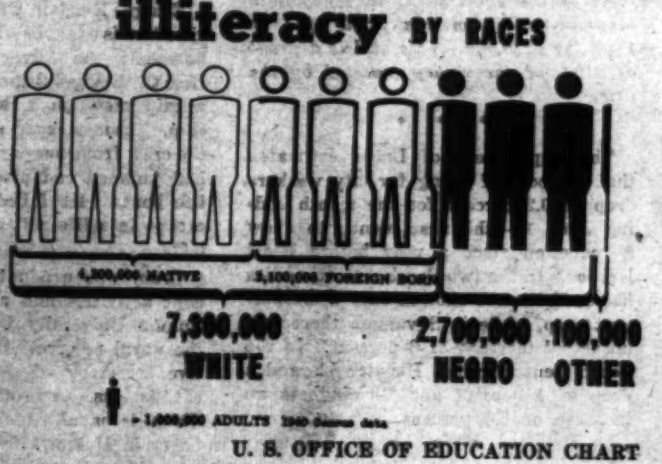
[1] In the NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN, Sept. 12, 1943.

[2] "We Have Federal Control of Education"—THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL, July, 1943.



ON THE HOME FRONT

One out of seven Americans over 25 years of age is illiterate. A total of over ten million.

U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION CHART

TRENDS

According to a Gallup poll the majority of Southerners favor a Federal anti-lynching law. A cross-section of the voters of 12 Southern states show 56 percent in favor, and 23 percent opposed, with 23 percent having no opinion. In 1937 in a similar poll, 57 percent of those with opinions favored the law, while today the percentage had jumped to 71 percent which Dr. Gallup termed a "substantial majority".

* * *

Fifty-five leading manufacturers of women's hosiery made five times as much last year, before taxes, as they did in peacetime (1936-39), according to an OPA study. Profits of these companies, 40 percent of the entire industry, rose from $3,614,000 (6 percent of their net worth) to $18,528,000 in 1942 (26.5 percent of their net worth). Sales dropped 4 percent from 1931 to 1942, while profits rose 27 percent.

These are the people who joined leaders of the canning industry in the fight against grade-labeling. Hosiery manufacturers who before the war made 3.1 cents on every dollar of sales are now making 13.7 profit on every dollar because they can now sell cheap goods at exhorbitant prices.

* * *

Jack Heintz Company (Jaheo) the fabulous outfit that supplies its employees with everything from canned music to vacations on Miami Beach, pays a secretary $48,000 a year, and operates without any absenteeism, made a profit last year of 1½ million dollars on a total business of 24 million dollars, or about 6%. However, the firm had only $100,000 capital invested, thus the 1½ million profit is really a profit of 1,500%.

Bill Jack currently is fighting the efforts of the government to renegotiate his contract allowing a profit of 1 or 1½%, or $240,000. This still is a profit of 240% of the money invested by the firm.

* * *

The Department of Labor estimated that the cost of living for city workers dropped 0.2 percent for the month ending June 15—the first month to show a reduction since a year before Pearl Harbor. In the two South Atlantic cities listed, Baltimore showed only a 0.1 percent drop, while in Savannah there was an actual increase of 3 percent. In the South Central cities, Houston showed a drop of 1 percent and Birmingham an increase of 0.5 percent.

* * *

Twenty American Legion posts in Chicago have formed a Council of Union Legionarries. First job: to prevent acceptance by the national convention in September of the 20 million dollars offered by a big business group to finance a so-called Americanism campaign. It has been made clear that the campaign would be in reality an anti-labor campaign.

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NLRB Elections:

Charlotte, N. C.: U. S. Rubber Co., URW, 1,720; "no union," 924.

Borger, Tex.: Danciger Oil Co., for OWIU, 46; against, 3.

Nashville, Tenn.: Se-Ling Aircraft won by International Asso. of Machinists.

Decatur, Ala.: Decatur Iron & Steel Co. shipyard, National Maritime Union, CIO, 97; AFL, 70.

Vicksburg, Miss.: Anderson Tulley, Plant D, Intl. Woodworkers, CIO, 160; "no union," 9.

Paragould, Ark.: Ely & Walker Shirt Co., ACWA certified as bargaining agent.

* * *

Plans to mobilize labor's political strength in the South were laid at a meeting in Birmingham sponsored by the CIO Political Action Committee. Key speakers were Van A. Bittner, vice-chairman, R. J. Thomas, secretary, and Sherman H. Dalrymple. Two previous regional meetings had been held in Philadelphia and Chicago.

* * *

Leaders of the AFL, CIO and Railway Brotherhoods have announced the formation of a United Labor Committee of Louisiana for the purpose of uniting labor in a political and legislative action program.

* * *

"Work or Fight Laws" Cloak Exploitation

Maryland Work or Fight Law—

The case of Stanley Day, Maryland farm boy unjustly sentenced to 30 days on the road gang under a State "work or fight" law, unfortunately is not an unusual miscarriage of justice. Ninteen-year-old Day worked at substandard wages for farmer Harry Bussard to pay off a debt owned by Day's father, a tenant on Bussard's land. When young Day, rejected by the Army as 4-F, became ill and did not show up for work one day, Bussard immediately reported him to the police and, after an argument, ordered him off the place.

Day was arrested while hitching to town to find another job. Sentence was passed by the local judge without consideration of major relevant facts: that Day was working for $2 a day when the prevailing wage was $3.75; that the "work or fight" law applies only when the offender refuses employment at prevailing wages; and furthermore, that Day was 4-F and there was no evidence that he had refused or would refuse to enter the Army. The judge, it later appeared, had not even read the statute under which he passed sentence.

(Continued on Page 7.)

Dixie's Heroes

Ensign Kendall Cram, former Nashville tennis star, has been awarded posthumously the Silver Star and Purple Heart. Ensign Cram was in charge of a gun crew on a torpedoed merchant ship. Cram rescued several members of the crew from compartments where doors had jammed and placed them safely in life boats. He failed to make his own escape in a life raft after the boats had left.

Cram was graduate manager of student activities and alumni secretary at Tulane University when he enlisted in the naval reserve. His father is executive secretary of the Methodist Board of Missions. A brother, Lieut. Winston Cram, is naval attache to the U. S. embassy in Moscow.

Gen. Douglas McArthur has awarded posthumously a Distinguished Service Cross to Pvt. George Watson, Birmingham Negro. Watson sacrificed his life to save several comrades last March, when they abandoned ship at Portlock Harbor, New Guinea, after it had been hit by enemy bombers. Exhausted by the exertions of his rescue work, Pvt. Watson was dragged to his death by the suction of the sinking ship.

In awarding the medal to Watson's bedridden grandmother, Mrs. Emma Gaines, Maj. Gen. Harry F. Hazlett said, "George Watson died in shining splendor of high courage and utter selflessness, true to the best traditions of the American soldier, an inspiration to every real American."

Organized Doctors Fight Maturnity Aid For Wives of Soldiers

Wives and babies of servicemen in six states are still unable to get the free maternity and infant care which Congress voted them last March. For this, they have to thank the dilatoriness or spinelessness of the health departments in Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania.

None of these health departments can claim lack of funds or legal authority as its alibi for failing to cooperate in a program which Congress intended should reach the wives of enlisted men wherever they may happen to live at the moment and whatever their financial condition. This program is simply an extension of the maternity and child health Social Security programs in which all states are participating. The Federal Government, through the U. S. Children's Bureau, foots the total cost of medical and hospital care to be given wives during pregnancy, childbirth, and six weeks thereafter, and of any medical care needed by their babies during their first year of life.

How much of the neglect or refusal of the six recalcitrant states to join up tracks back to American Medical Association opposition isn't clear in every instance, but there is reason to suspect that is where the trouble breeds.

Ohio's State Medical Association had that State's health officer cowed for weeks by its opposition to the plan.

Ohio's doctors apparently do not think the Federal Government has a responsibility for seeing that the babies of our fighting men have a chance to be born safely and that their mothers' health and safety should be protected in childbirth. Conceding this responsibility might provide a terrifying precedent for insuring some day safe birth to all of America's babies.

University of Texas Regents Lashed by Ex-Legislator

Texas Attorney Lashs—

The board of regents of the University of Texas was described as "cheap little home imitation fascists" by Herman Jones, former Texas legislator and former director of the gas division of the Texas railroad commission, in a Labor Day speech in Barton Springs, Texsa. Jones, a graduate and one time instructor in the University of Texas law school, declared that the action of the regents in removing Arthur Brandon as director of University relations without warning and without a hearing lacked American fairness and justice.

Jones also charged that a movement is under way to remove Dr. Homer P. Rainey as president of the University.

Attorney Jones also condemned the sniping of public officials in Texas at the Roosevelt administration on the home front while the administration is concerned with the important task of winning the war.

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"Work or Fight Laws"

(Continued from Page 6.)

Through mere accident, the WASHINGTON POST heard of this injustice and brought it to light. When the Civil Liberties Division of the Department of Justice threatened prosecution of offending officials, the State's Attorney stepped in and had Day released. The incident, however, brought to prominence numerous and equally flagrant offences by Maryland officials.

"Legal" Peonage

In one instance, a Negro, Jasper Merrill, was convicted under the "work or fight" law and paroled into the custody of the complaining employer. This is a clear case of "legal" peonage, as to seek work elsewhere would have rendered Merrill liable to a stiff sentence for parole violation.

Draft Boards and Farm Labor

Particularly sinister are the many instances where draft boards have sent boys to the Army, rather than permit them to leave localities of surplus farm labor supply to take essential jobs for which they were qualified in war plants. The problem of manpower supply and control is of nationwide scope and of major importance. Local interests, as pushed in local "work or fight" laws, and irresponsible actions of State and local officials, cannot be permitted to hinder the movement of labor from remaining areas of labor surplus or to victimize workers receiving substandard wages.

Child Labor For Sale—Cheap

Sleepy and tired children in Nashville schools led to an investigation of the probable causes of the heavy eyelids during school hours.

A survey of school children under 16 years of age revealed that 899 were employed illegally. 517 were less than 14 years old, and 19 were only 8 years old. They were working in bowling alleys, drug stores, groceries and markets, restaurants and beer gardens, on milk trucks, skating rinks, etc.

The children worked 20, 40 and 60 hours a week in addition to their school hours, and 15 of them worked more than 60 hours a week.

"One small boy, age 11," said the report, "has been employed by a bowling alley from 4 p. m. to 12 p. m. seven days a week (longer hours on Saturday and Sunday) and received $1.22 for a week's employment." A Nashville sporting page has estimated that a pin boy in a bowling alley lifts on an average of 7 tons a night.